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HISTORIC STONE ARCHITECTURE

OF

WINTERSET, IOWA

PRIOR TO AND DURING THE

CIVIL WAR PERIOD

by

Robert R. Harvey

A Report Submitted to

Professor Patten in Partial Fulfillment of

The Requirements for

Architecture 352, 353, and 426

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

1960







HISTORICAL STONE HOUSES  
OF  
WINTERSET, IOWA





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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the central and south portions of the City of Winterset, Iowa, are a number of outstanding limestone residences and buildings. These structures are the primary concern of this report.

My principle objective in writing this report was to uncover some of the historic background of these structures, which are dispersed not only throughout the City of Winterset, but over Madison County as well. I have attempted to point out some of the physical and economic factors which combined to produce an architectural form not common at that time to this area of the Midwest.

I did not attempt to investigate completely all of the structures. Three residences which I considered to be outstanding (for reasons that are brought forth in the main text) were selected and investigated. These structures are the Caleb Clark Residence, the M. R. Tidrick Residence, and the J. G. Vawter Residence.

Although the concern of this report is historic stone architecture, I have included some information in regard to the covered bridges for which Madison County is also known.

Some of these limestone structures are fast falling into poor repair from neglect. Because of their historical and architectural value, I feel that some effort should be made to preserve this link with the past so that future generations may benefit from them.





Since these buildings were constructed during the 1850's and 60's there is a definite lack of printed material capable of yielding substantial information. Therefore, a large amount of my information was derived from personal interview, family records and letters, and direct investigation of the structures. Whenever I have found that different sources of information have failed to agree I have included the contrasting versions in the text.

In organizing this report I have briefly mentioned the geological structure and history of Madison County in an attempt to create an understanding of the factors affecting this area prior to and during the Civil War period. Concluding, I isolated the three previously mentioned residences for closer examination.



HISTORICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND  
OF MADISON COUNTY, IOWA





HISTORICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND  
OF MADISON COUNTY, IOWA

Madison County is located in the third tier of counties from the southern boundary of the State of Iowa, and corners Polk County on the southwest. Madison County's area is approximately 576 square miles. It was defined by an act of the Territorial Legislature, approved January 13, 1846, but was not fully organized until April 1850.<sup>1</sup>

According to Mr. Andreas's, Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa, ..."The county was surveyed into sections in 1849, by John A. Pitzer and Enoch Eastman, having been previously divided into townships. Mr. Pitzer had charge of the survey in the north half of the county. The land was brought into market the following year, and the first entries were made in November."

The two main requisites for the construction of the stone residences and business buildings, found in Madison County and the City of Winterset, were technical knowledge and an abundance of suitable material. The technical know-how was brought from the East by the early settlers when they migrated to this area. The second important factor, a suitable building material, existed, as large deposits of limestone, when the settlers arrived. This limestone was found along the bluffs of the streams and was easily quarried. (fig. 1, plate 1)

---

<sup>1</sup>A. T. Andreas. Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa. Chicago, Lakeside Press. 1875.





A brief resume' of Madison County's geology will give us a better understanding of the resources that were available. It should also help to explain the wide acceptance of limestone as a building material in this area during the middle 1800's.

Madison County is divided between the middle and upper coal measures, with the latter predominating. The boundary between these coal measures is located several miles to the northeast of Winterset. It runs transversely to the course of North River and Cedar Creek, as indicated by the black overlay. (fig. 1)

The rock of the upper coal measure furnishes a limestone that makes an admirable building material. This limestone is of excellent quality, capable of resisting heavy pressure and disintegration or decay from exposure. It is found in substantial quantities in all but the northeast part of the county. The stone belongs to the coal formation, which is comprised of sandstone, fire clay, slate, shale and limestone. Fossil shells compose the stone which generally breaks with a glossy fracture and spalls well. It makes excellent lime, and is a strong and durable building material hard enough to resist crushing action by the weight of the structure.<sup>1</sup>

In the western and southeastern part of the county is found a limestone suitable for cutting purposes. The stone

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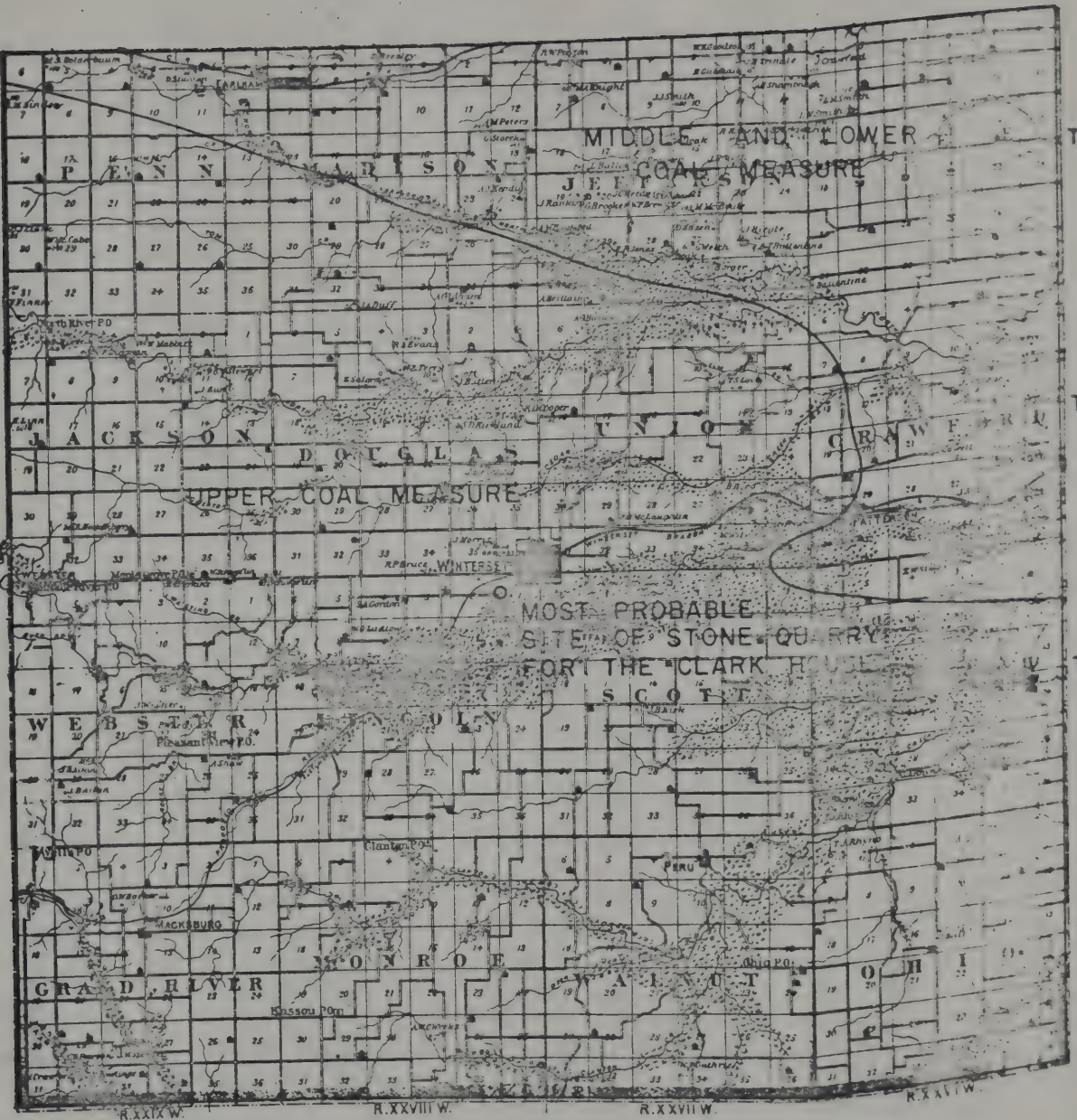
<sup>1</sup>History of Madison County, Iowa. Des Moines, Union Historical Company. 1879.



# MADISON COUNTY

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UNION CO.

CLARK CO.

LOCATION OF EXISTING  
COVERED BRIDGES

## REFERENCE

Church  
School House  
Barn  
Post Office  
Mill  
Blacksmith Shop  
Cemetery  
Grist Mill  
Lime Mill  
Windmill  
Railroad  
Proposed Railroad  
Tribune  
Swamp  
Creek  
River



1. CEDAR BRIDGE
2. CUTLER BRIDGE
3. HOGBACK BRIDGE
4. HOLLIWELL BRIDGE
5. IMES BRIDGE
6. MCBRIDE BRIDGE
7. ROSEMAN BRIDGE



SOURCE OF MADISON COUNTY MAP  
ANDREAS, A.T.  
HISTORICAL ATLAS OF THE  
STATE OF IOWA. CHICAGO,  
LAKESIDE PRESS. 1875





DALLAS CO.



U N I O N   C O .

CLARK CO.

## REFERENCE

1. CEDAR BRIDGE
2. CUTLER BRIDGE
3. HOGBACK BRIDGE
4. HOLLIWELL BRIDGE
5. IMES BRIDGE
6. MCBRIDE BRIDGE
7. ROSEMAN BRIDGE



SOURCE OF MADISON COUNTY MAP  
ANDREAS, A.T.  
HISTORICAL ATLAS OF THE  
STATE OF IOWA. CHICAGO,  
LAKESIDE PRESS. 1873

Quercus  
 Pinus  
 Picea  
 Larix  
 Thuja  
 Taxus  
 Juniperus  
 Cupressus  
 Podocarpus  
 Agave  
 Yucca  
 Cordyline  
 Pandanus  
 Cycas  
 Ginkgo  
 Liquidambar  
 Fraxinus  
 Alnus  
 Betula  
 Populus  
 Salix  
 Tilia  
 Liriodendron  
 Magnolia  
 Osmanthus  
 Camellia  
 Sassafras  
 Liquidambar  
 Fraxinus  
 Alnus  
 Betula  
 Populus  
 Salix  
 Tilia  
 Liriodendron  
 Magnolia  
 Osmanthus  
 Camellia  
 Sassafras





ranges in color from almost pure white to near yellow. The stone retains its color well. The limestone is not fit for polishing but it takes a good finish in cutting. Some sources indicated that it is the best or among the best stone found for cutting purposes within the State of Iowa.

By observing the population figures from 1849 to 1857 we are able to obtain an idea of Madison County's growth prior to and throughout the period which most of the stone buildings and residences we are presently concerned with were erected.

"At the time of the organization, in 1849, the county contained 701 men, women, and children. In 1850 this number had increased to 1174, which shows the rapid growth immediately after the organization. In 1851 the population was 1492, and in 1852 it had increased to 1832. At this time there came a throng of emigration, mostly from Ohio, and in 1854 the population numbered 3,122. The influx of newcomers continued, and in 1856 the county numbered 5,508, and in 1857 there was a population of 7,081."<sup>1</sup>

As can be seen by the above figures the county showed considerable growth from the year 1854 to 1857. There is a definite correlation between this growth and the growth and development of Winterset, the county seat. These years preceded the panic of 1857 and the last three years prior to 1857 were indicated by the historians of the Union Historical Company to have been, "the golden days of Winterset". It was during this prosperous period that Winterset's stone

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<sup>1</sup>Union Historical Company, op. cit.



residences and business buildings were erected. When this period of economic prosperity slackened the construction of these stone structures tapered off and practically ceased. This construction recession was not due to scarcity of material since at the present time limestone still assumes an active role in Madison County's economy. It is now used primarily in the manufacture of Portland Cement. Due to increased labor costs, the quarrying and cutting of stone and the erection of the massive stone walls made this type of construction uneconomical in comparison to more conventional frame or masonry construction.

Having acquainted ourselves with the major factors that combined to produce these structures; technical know-how, an abundance of quality materials, and a prosperous economy, we can continue by studying the early history of the City of Winterset.

considerable growth from a definite correlation between development of Winterset preceded the panic of 1857. 1857 were indicated by the Company to have been, "the during this prosperous per





HISTORIC STONE ARCHITECTURE OF WINTERSSET, IOWA





## HISTORIC STONE ARCHITECTURE OF WINTERSET, IOWA

Winterset is located near the geographical center of the county and is pleasantly situated on excellent ground about one mile distant from Middle River. The site of Winterset was originally a wide expanse of prairie grass practically devoid of trees.

William Combs, David Bishop and William Gentry are listed by many references as the county commissioners who selected the site of Winterset, in July, 1849. I found, however, that some sources disagreed a great deal with this statement. The following appears to be the most reliable account.

"In every sketch of the county, as well as in every gazeteer and book of reference, in which the matter is mentioned at all, it is stated that William Combs, David Bishop and William Gentry were the commissioners who located Winterset and gave it its name. This is an entire mistake so far as the selection of the location is concerned. Bishop, Combs and Gentry were the county commissioners at this time, but the work of locating a county seat was always placed by the legislature in the hands of men who lived outside the county, and who were supposed to be more thoroughly impartial and disinterested. Accordingly, it was Messrs. Thomas Babbit, S. Bond and George Gillaspay -- all just and fair men, and non-residents of the county -- who were charged with the duty of locating the county seat of Madison County."<sup>1</sup>

"The site was the premises of John Guiberson, who received for it the sum of one hundred ninety-four dollars and fifty cents from the county."<sup>2</sup> A conflict was noted between

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<sup>1</sup>Union Historical Company, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Andrews, op. cit.



Mr. Andreas's, Historical Atlas of Iowa and Mr. Mueller's, History of Madison County, Iowa, which indicated that John Culbertson was the owner of the land.

"The town was surveyed and plotted July, 1849, by Alfred D. Jones, assisted by P. M. Boyles and Enos Berger."<sup>1</sup> The plot was divided off into lots one hundred and thirty-two feet in length north and south and sixty feet in width east and west. For some time following the Winterset survey, the streets were still not marked and consisted of mere trails through the grass. "From 1850 to 1853, there were not more than ten houses built in the town, if indeed, there were that many. About 1854, the town began to grow very rapidly and continued, so that at the end of three years it was incorporated as a city."<sup>2</sup>

Most evidence seems to indicate that Caleb Clark started construction of the first stone residence in Winterset. This one-story house may have been started in 1854, but it was not completed until 1855. The residence is still standing, but at the time of this writing is unoccupied and in a sad state of repair. (fig.'s 2 and 3, plate 1) A smaller stone building which was used as a barn is standing nearby. (fig. 4, plate 1) These structures are located on South Eighth Avenue about one block south of Summit Street or Highway 92. (overlay, fig. 2)

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<sup>1</sup>Andreas, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Union Historical Company, op. cit.







FIG. 1— TYPICAL LIMESTONE STRATA  
IN QUARRY



FIG. 2— CALEB CLARK RESIDENCE AS  
VIEWED FROM NORTHWEST



FIG. 3— CALEB CLARK RESIDENCE AS  
VIEWED FROM SOUTHEAST



FIG. 4— SMALL STONE BUILDING WEST  
OF CALEB CLARK RESIDENCE

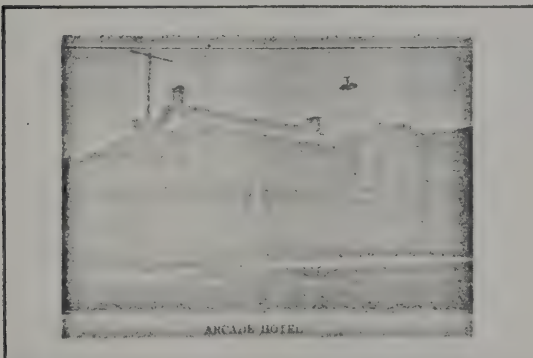


FIG. 5— ARCADE HOTEL AT ABOUT 1915  
\*



FIG. 6— THE ARCADE HOTEL AS IT  
APPEARED IN 1958

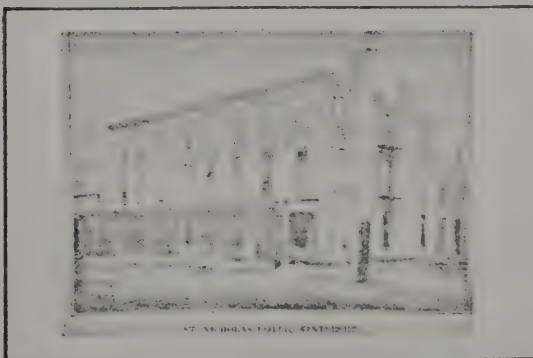


FIG. 7— ST. NICHOLAS HOTEL AT ABOUT  
\* 1915 — NO LONGER STANDING



FIG. 8— J. G. VAWTER RESIDENCE AS  
VIEWED FROM SOUTHWEST

\* SOURCE OF 1915 PHOTOGRAPHS — MUELLER, HERMAN A., HISTORY OF MADISON COUNTY,  
IOWA. VOLUME I. 1915





# WINTERSET

IOWA

SCALE 1 IN. = 200 FT.



## LEGEND

- EXISTING BUILDINGS
- RESIDENCES STUDIED

SOURCE OF WINTERSET, IOWA MAP  
MADISON COUNTY ENGINEERS OFFICE  
WINTERSET, IOWA





"In the summer of 1855 Caleb Clark entered the building business. He built a residence for Dr. John H. Gaff, on the corner of Court Avenue and South Second Street. This was one of the first good dwellings in Winterset and after Dr. Gaff left Winterset it was occupied by John A. Pitzer. Later a brick addition was built and it was put to use as a hotel under the name of the Arcade Hotel." <sup>1</sup>

This building is still in use today under the same name. It has undergone quite noticeable alteration in later years. Around 1915, the hotel had an arcade along the north and east facades with a balustrade above it. The roof was gabled with a chimney located at either end. Since 1915, the arcade and balustrade has been removed from the east facade and the balustrade has been removed from the north arcade. Probably, the most startling change in the structure resulted from the removal of the gabled roof and chimneys. The gabled roof was replaced with a flat roof and the stonework was hidden beneath a coat of white paint. (fig's 5 and 6, plate 1) (overlay, fig.2)

"In 1856 Mr. Pitzer built the Pitzer House, later known as the St. Nicholas Hotel. It was a large three story stone house and at the time it was built was the largest hotel in southwestern Iowa. It cost twelve thousand dollars." <sup>2</sup> (fig. 7, plate 1)

This structure has been destroyed but was significant in that the construction of this hotel was an indication of the trend toward increased prosperity, which was accompanied by

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<sup>1</sup>Judge W. H. Lewis. Historical Paper presented before the Madison County Historical Society. Winterset, Iowa. 1926

<sup>2</sup>J. J. Davies. Davies' History and Directory of Madison County, Iowa. Des Moines, Mills and Company. 1869.





expansion of building in Winterset. During this period of increased construction activity a number of fine buildings and residences were erected. According to Mr. Davies in Davies' History and Directory of Madison County, Iowa, "The number of stone structures Winterset contained at this period gave it an appearance unlike any other city in the region."

Following the construction of the "Pitzer House," Mr. J. G. Vawter built a large two and a half story stone residence on the corner of First Avenue and South Street. (overlay, fig. 2) This was regarded as the finest dwelling house in Madison County at that time. The house is still in excellent condition today and is presently occupied. (fig. 8, plate 1)

The stonework in the Vawter residence is outstanding and like so many of the residences and business buildings is attributed to a stone mason by the name of Caleb Clark. No doubt there were a number of stone masons in Winterset during this period but it appears that one of the more prominent was Mr. Clark.

Personal records of the Clark family in the form of Judge W. H. Lewis' paper before the County Historical Society in 1926 indicates that Caleb Clark was directly responsible for the following structures; the Clark residence, the Dr. Gaff residence, the St. Nicholas Hotel, the J. G. Vawter residence and the Judge Guiberson residence on the corner of South Street and South Fourth Avenue.



Located at 122 South Fourth Avenue, is a one and one half story stone house which is known as the M. R. Tidrick residence. (overlay, fig. 2) This building was constructed in 1856 and has undergone several additions. I will deal with these more specifically later. The residence is in a fine state of repair and is occupied at present by Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Butterfield. (fig's 9 and 10, plate 2)

The Judge Guiberson residence is a two story structure. "The foundation for this house was laid before 1861, but the house itself was not completed until after the close of the Civil War."<sup>1</sup> (fig's 11 and 12, plate 2) The residence has two large chimneys located at either end of the house. The fireplaces are not in use at present but remain intact.

Judge Guiberson appears to have been engaged in the building business or at least constructed several houses for himself during his stay in Winterset. I base this conclusion on several photographs obtained from Mr. Mueller's, History of Madison County Iowa. The photographs show two houses, one frame and one of stone, which were also known as Judge Guiberson residences. Note the similarity of the remaining residence (fig. 12, plate 2) and the stone house shown in figure 13. Both houses are quite similar except for the placement of the windows and doors. I would caution the reader that Judge Guiberson probably

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the Judge Guiberson residence at the corner of 122 South Fourth Avenue.

<sup>1</sup>and Madison County's Wonderful Stone Houses. The Iowan.  
Vol 2. No. 6. August-September 1954.





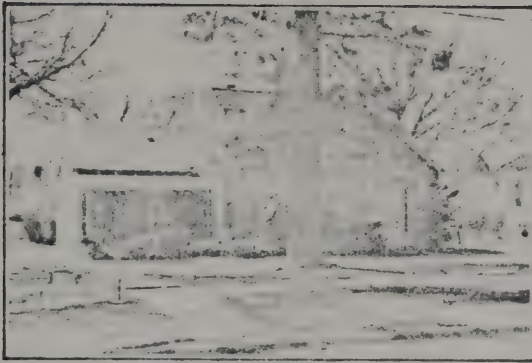


FIG. 9 — M. R. TIDRICK RESIDENCE AS VIEWED FROM EAST



FIG. 10 — M. R. TIDRICK RESIDENCE AS VIEWED FROM WEST

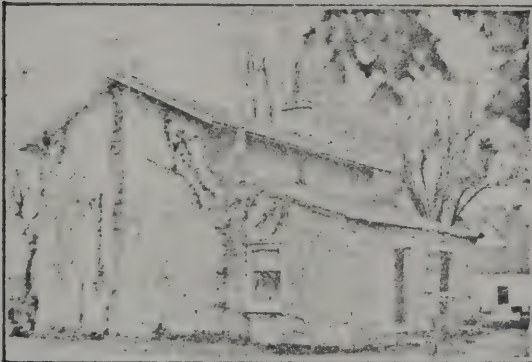


FIG. 11 — JUDGE GUIBERSON HOUSE AS VIEWED FROM NORTHWEST

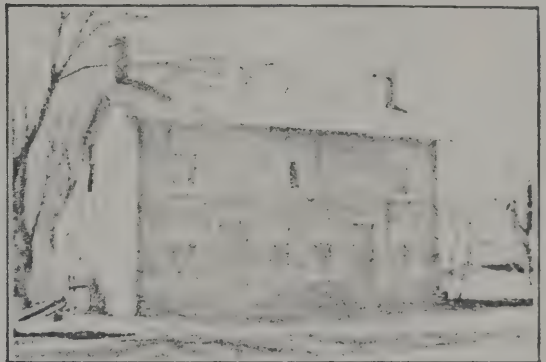


FIG. 12 — EAST FACADE OF THE JUDGE GUIBERSON HOUSE

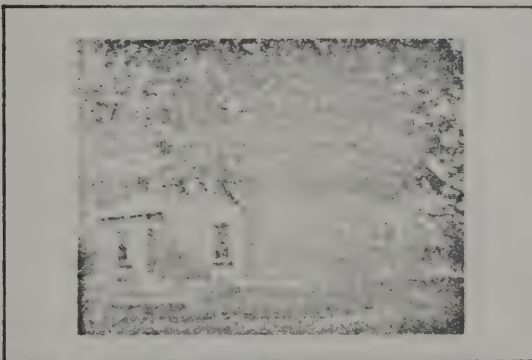


FIG. 13 — RESIDENCE BUILT BY JUDGE GUIBERSON — TORN DOWN 1913  
\*



FIG. 14 — HORNBACK HOUSE AS VIEWED FROM WEST



FIG. 15 — JOSEPH KELSO RESIDENCE SHOWING EAST FACADE



FIG. 16 — RESIDENCE LOCATED AT CORNER OF SOUTH FOURTH AND COURT AVENUES

\* SOURCE OF PHOTOGRAPH — MUELLER, HERMAN A., HISTORY OF MADISON COUNTY, IOWA. VOLUME I. 1915



was the builder of these houses only in the sense that he supplied the financial backing. We know from Judge Lewis' historical paper that Caleb Clark was responsible for the actual construction of at least the structure that remains.

On the southwest corner of Summit Street and South Fourth Avenue is the Joseph Kelso home. (overlay, fig. 2) This house was also built in the Civil War period and was completed in 1866. From the exterior it appears to be in a good state of repair and has always been occupied.

The Hornback house is located in the northern portion of the town on Highway 169. (Fig. 14, plate 2) All of the other buildings constructed from limestone were in the south half of Winterset. I have no information that discloses the actual construction date of this house. The Iowan, August-September 1954 indicated that this house was built at a later date than the others, presumably after the Civil War. It is in good condition and is occupied.

The last of the four homes that are located on South Fourth Avenue is only partially stone. This house is one block north of the M. R. Tidrick home. (fig. 16, plate 2) The south portion of the house is of frame construction and is larger than the north part which is constructed of limestone. The doors, windows and quoins on the corners of the stone portion have been rusticated. This type of craftsmanship is also found in the Hornback house. At the present time the porch that appears across the front of the house in figure 16 has been removed and the house is undergoing alteration.





There are several other houses in Winterset that are constructed of native limestone, however there is little information concerning these houses so I have elected to omit them from the report. I have located them on the overlay that accompanies figure 2.

"Just after Winterset's incorporation, came the panic of 1857 which had a sad effect on Winterset. Property greatly depreciated and people were discouraged."<sup>1</sup> The preceeding statement I feel indicates the changing times and economy which was eventually to bring the construction of the stone buildings and residences to a halt. Another account of this panic was given as follows.

"The year 1857 was one of great commercial depression, which brough on a panic that caused disaster throughout the United States. The distressful situation was keenly felt in Winterset and business enterprises of all kinds were brought to a standstill. Many of the pioneer business men were ruined and for some years afterwards the cry of 'hard times' was universal. By the year 1860, the village manifested concrete evidences of recuperation, notwithstanding the dread war clouds that then hovered over the Union."<sup>2</sup>

The panic of 1857 left its mark on Winterset, and combined with the Civil War and changing times, the use of native limestone for construction purposes fell off during the closing of the 19th century. Therefore, construction with stone in

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<sup>1</sup> Union Historical Company, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Herman A. Mueller. History of Madison County Iowa.  
Vol. I. 1915



Winterset was limited to the 19th century, except for a few isolated instances in more recent years.

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Union Historical Society, Vol. 1

Bernard A. Ingham. History of Winterset, Iowa

Vol. 1, 1911









### THE CALEB CLARK HOUSE.

The Caleb Clark house is a one story structure located on South Eighth Avenue about one block south of Summit Street. (overlay, Fig. 2) This was the home of the mason who constructed many of the other stone buildings in Winterset. It is interesting to note that Mr. Clark did not use the same excellent workmanship on this house that is quite noticeable in the other structures. The house is soundly constructed but with no embellishments. (fig's 2 and 3, plate 1)

Construction began in 1854 but was not completed until 1855. Personal records of the family indicate that the Clarks spent the intervening winter in the main portion of the uncompleted house. The original building was approximately twenty by forty feet laid out with the long dimension running east and west. (fig. 3-A) It consisted of four rooms; a parlor, bedroom, kitchen and a center room, probably used for general family living. A fire place was located on the west wall of the kitchen but has been sealed over in later years.

The eighteen inch walls of this residence were constructed of native limestone supposedly quarried one mile south of the building site. I have attempted to locate the probable site of this quarry. It is known from the Clark family records that Mr. Clark had a lime kiln in the same vicinity as the quarry. On a map of Madison County, taken from Mr. Andreas' Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa, I discovered a lime kiln existing in 1875. This might serve as an indication of





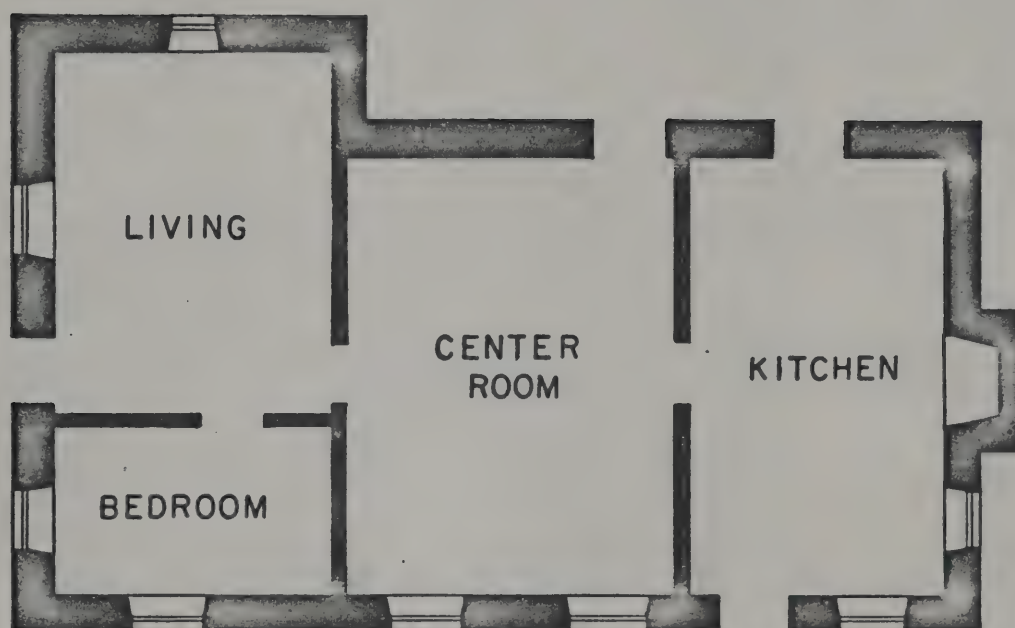
original quarry's location. (black overlay, fig. 1)

The first addition to this house was a wellhouse which was constructed to the south of the kitchen. (fig. 3-B)

It was ten by twenty two feet. The well was located at the north end of the room. With this additon the house started to take on its present el-shaped form. This characteristic became more pronounced with the construction of a smokehouse south of the wellhouse. (fig. 3-C) West of the house is a small stone building that was used as a barn.

At the present time both the house and the adjacent building are in a poor state of repair. No one is occupying this residence but at the time of this writing the property is tied up with legal action pending its purchase and probable renovation.

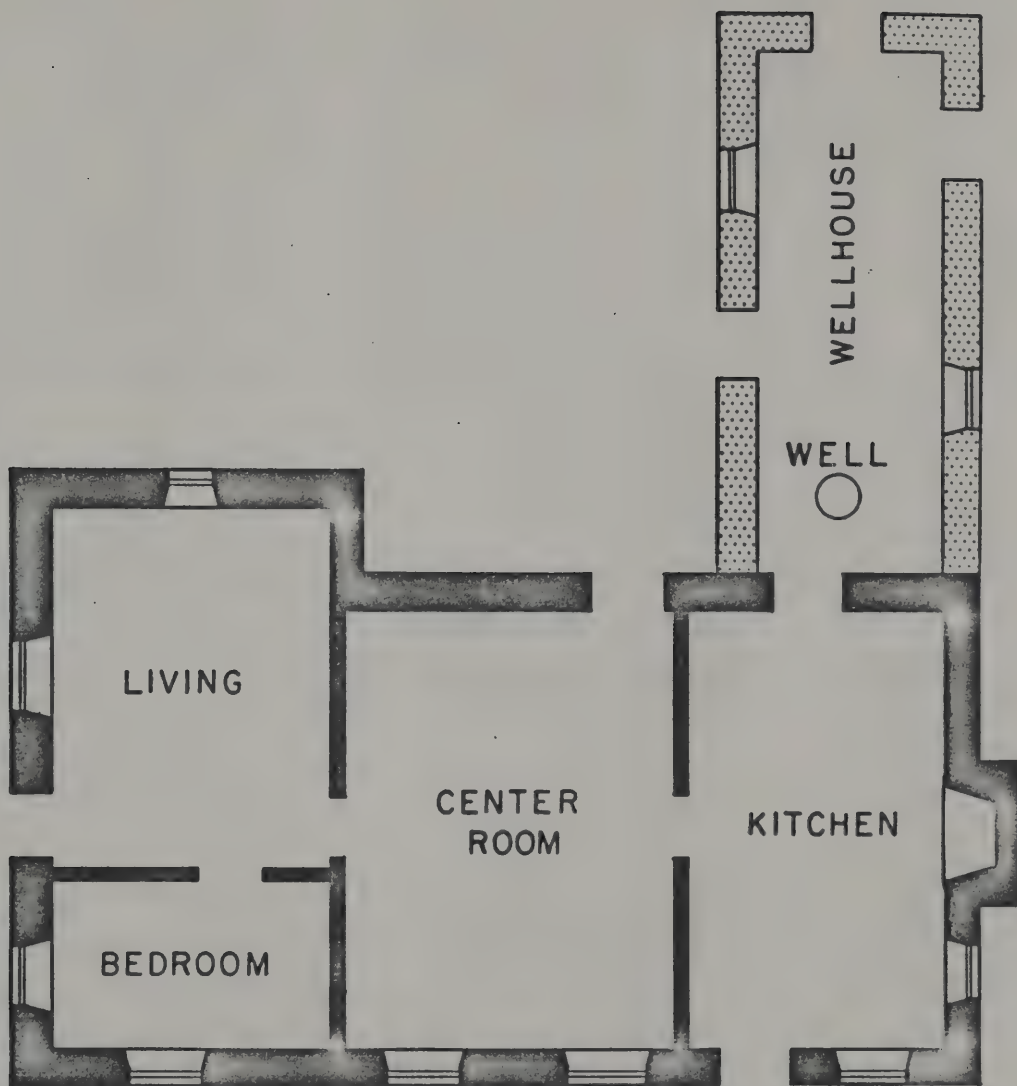




CALEB CLARK HOUSE — ORIGINAL HOUSE

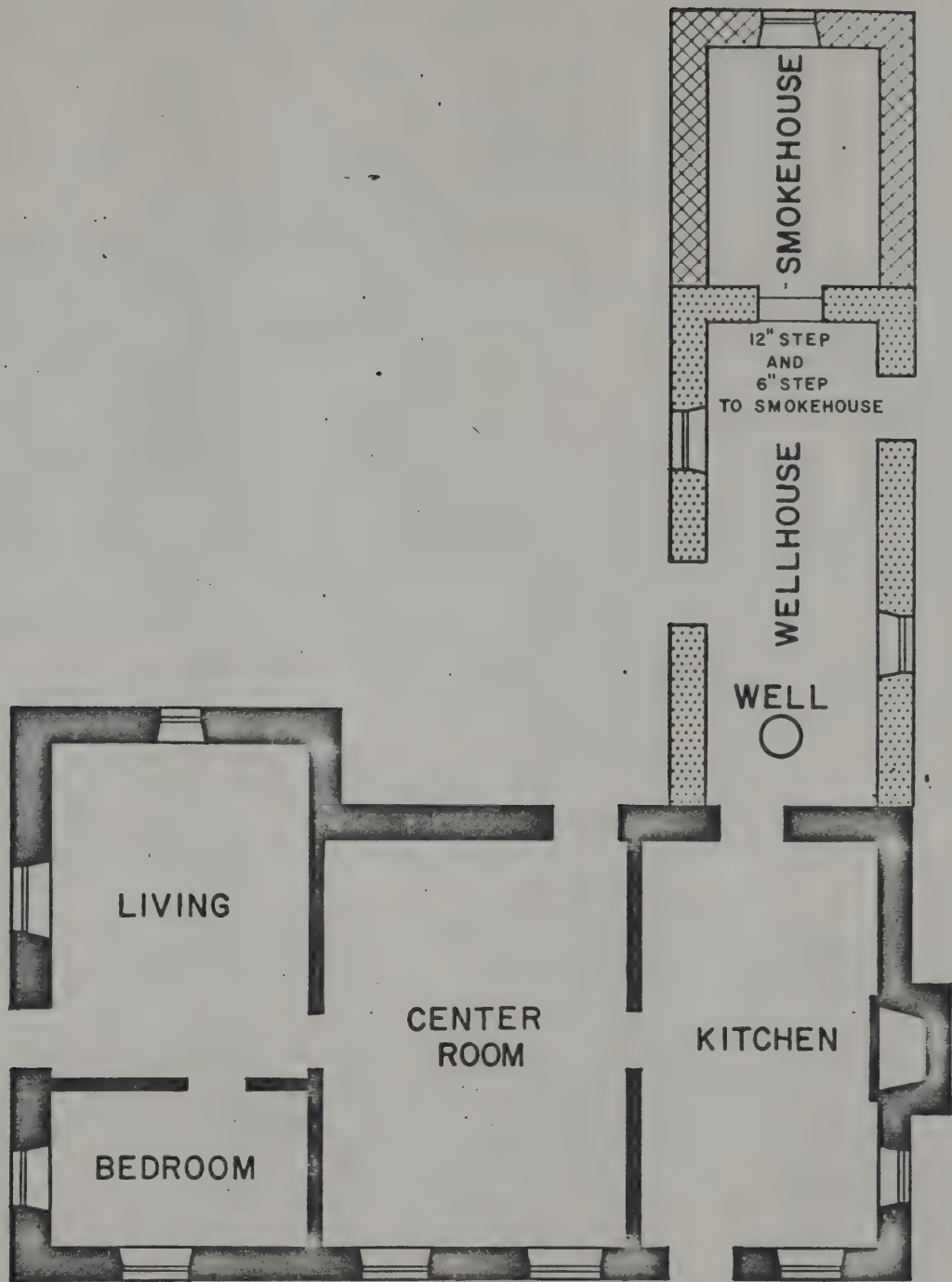






CALEB CLARK HOUSE — WELLHOUSE ADDITION





CALEB CLARK HOUSE — SMOKEHOUSE ADDITION





CALEB CLARK HOUSE  
LIST OF FORMER OWNERS AND DATES

Homesteaded by Ebenezer Elliot Government Patent	Sept. 1, 1851
Purchased by W. W. McKnight from Ebenezer Elliot	Mar. 23, 1855
Purchased from Wm. W. McKnight by Joseph J. Hutchings	May 31, 1855
Purchased from Joseph J. Hutchings and Wm. W. McKnight by Caleb Clark	Jan. 15, 1855
Caleb Clark passed away on Nov. 12, 1894	
Caleb Clark's daughter, Sara C. Wilkinson et al to C. F. Clark	Nov. 14, 1894
Ruth Clanton Clark passed away Jan. 10, 1901	
Purchased from C. F. Clark and wife Mary by A. Lake	Mar. 1, 1901
Charles Gibson by referee to Melissa Gibson	July 29, 1908
Purchased from Melissa Gibson by Sarah L. Patton	Mar. 1, 1909
Last Owner, Sarah Lou Nelson	
At the moment of this writing the house is unoccupied. However the property is tied up with legal action pending its purchase.	

The above information is on file in the office of the  
Recorder of Madison County in the city of Winterset, Iowa.



THE M. R. TIDRICK HOUSE





### THE M. R. TIDRICK HOUSE

The M. R. Tidrick house is a one and one-half story structure located at 122 South Fourth Avenue. (overlay, fig 2) I have not been able to uncover any information disclosing the builder or the architect of this house. It is known that the original building was constructed in 1856, with two later additions. (fig's 9 and 10, plate 2) The residence has evolved through successive additions from a nearly square house, measuring thirty two by twenty nine feet, into its present rambling state.

The first floor originally consisted of a living room, dining room, and kitchen with two bedrooms upstairs in the half story. (fig. 4-A) The first addition to the south included a veranda and was constructed in 1866. When this alteration was complete the house contained a first floor bedroom opening onto the veranda. (fig. 4-B) The veranda was surfaced with the same stone as the dwelling but in recent years it has been capped with concrete. In 1874, the residence had an addition on the northwest corner. The completion of this wing produced a room arrangement which would be quite awkward for modern homemakers. The former kitchen was changed to a bedroom and the addition contained the new kitchen. In order to travel between the kitchen and the dining room one had to pass through the bedroom. (fig. 4-C) In later years a more suitable room arrangement put the old kitchen back into use thus solving the problem. (fig. 4-D)

One interesting characteristic of this house is an unexplained mis-matching of stone below an upper window of the east facade.



This mis-matching suggests that there may have been a door in this location at one time, however no record can be found to verify it. Slide number thirty-four shows this area of the stone. One theory advanced concerning this door indicates that it may have permitted access to an upper porch. This porch was either planned but not erected or constructed and removed with no record remaining.

Investigation of the basement walls shows that the foundation was laid of large limestone blocks approximately thirty inches thick.

The Tidrick house is presently occupied by Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Butterfield and nothing about it except its material and architecture indicates the years that it has been used and enjoyed by families in Winterset.

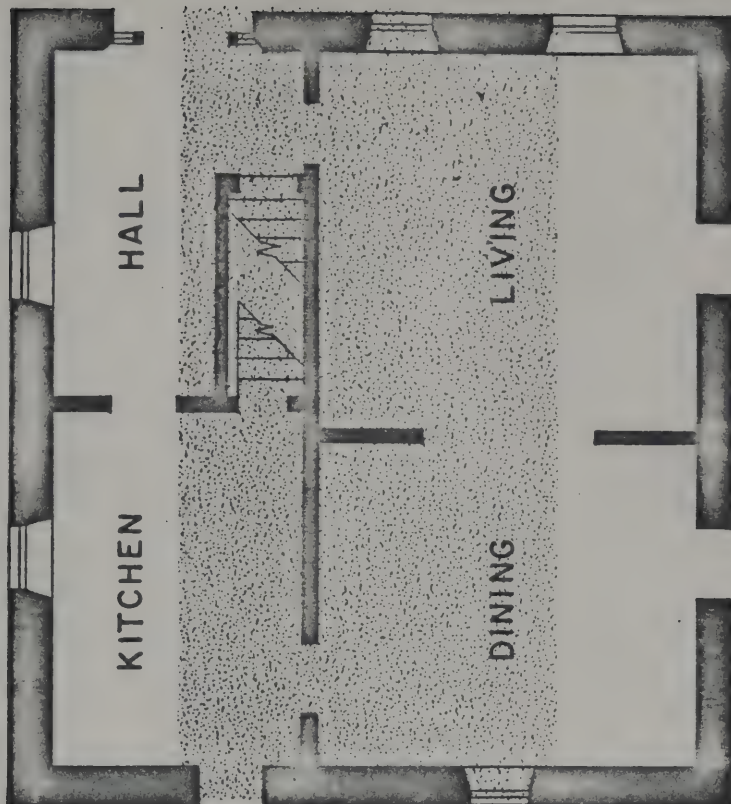
One interesting characteristic of this house is an unusual

mis-matching of stone below the upper window of the east porch.

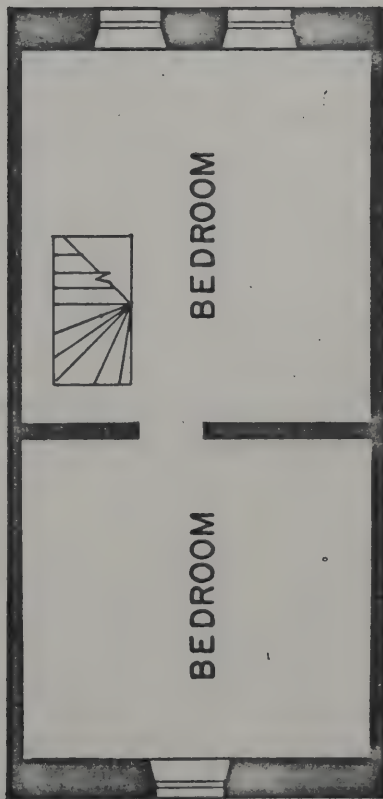




FIRST FLOOR



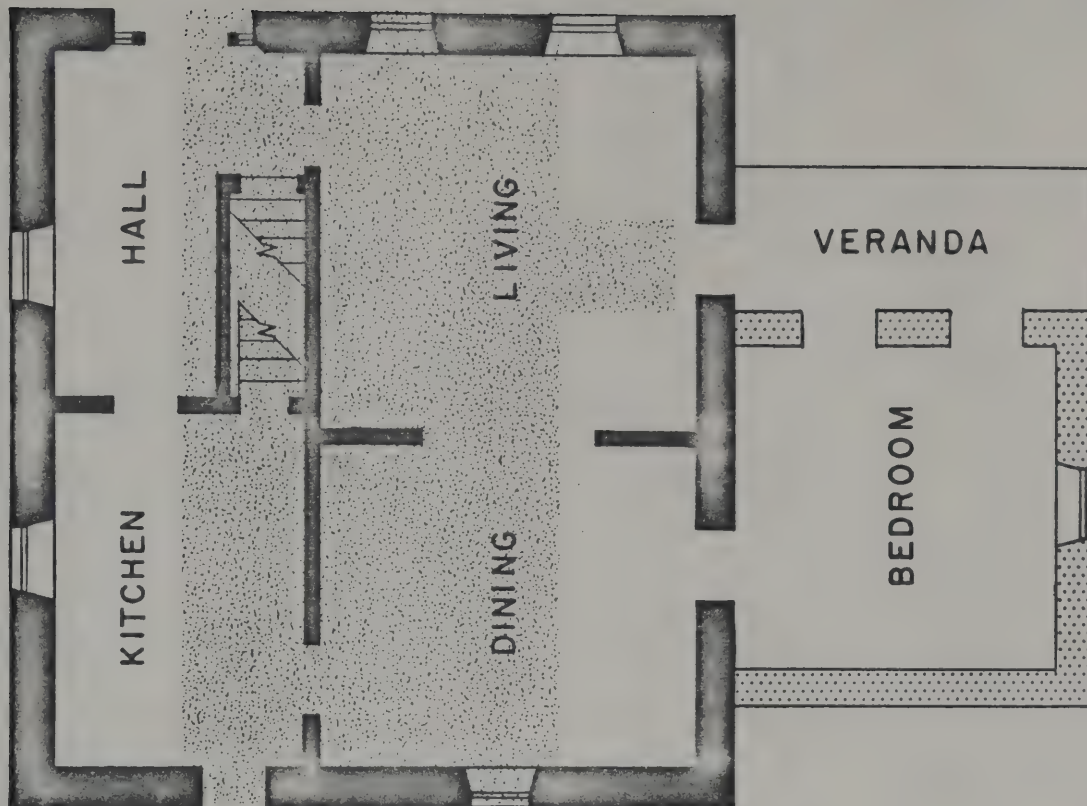
SECOND FLOOR



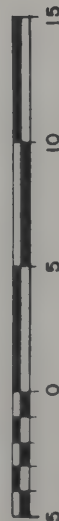
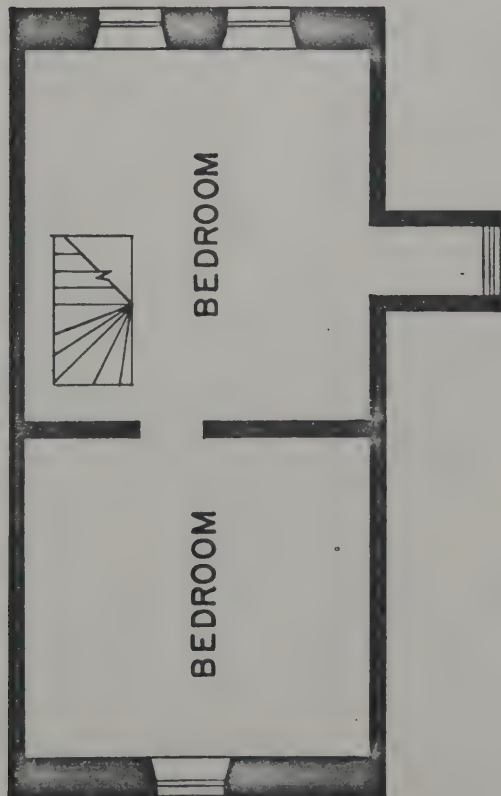
M. R. TIDRICK HOUSE - 1856



FIRST FLOOR



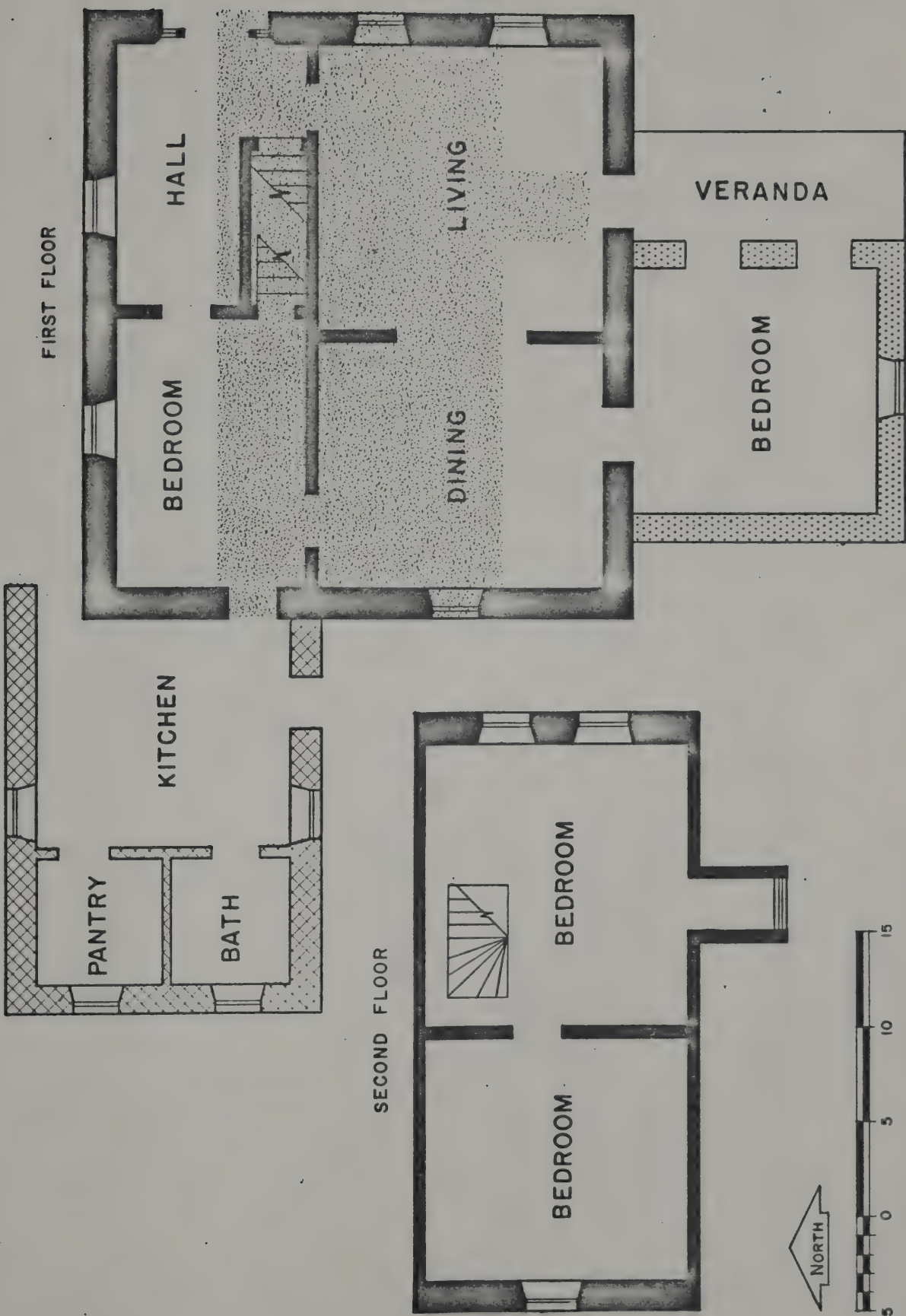
SECOND FLOOR



M. R. TIDRICK HOUSE - 1866

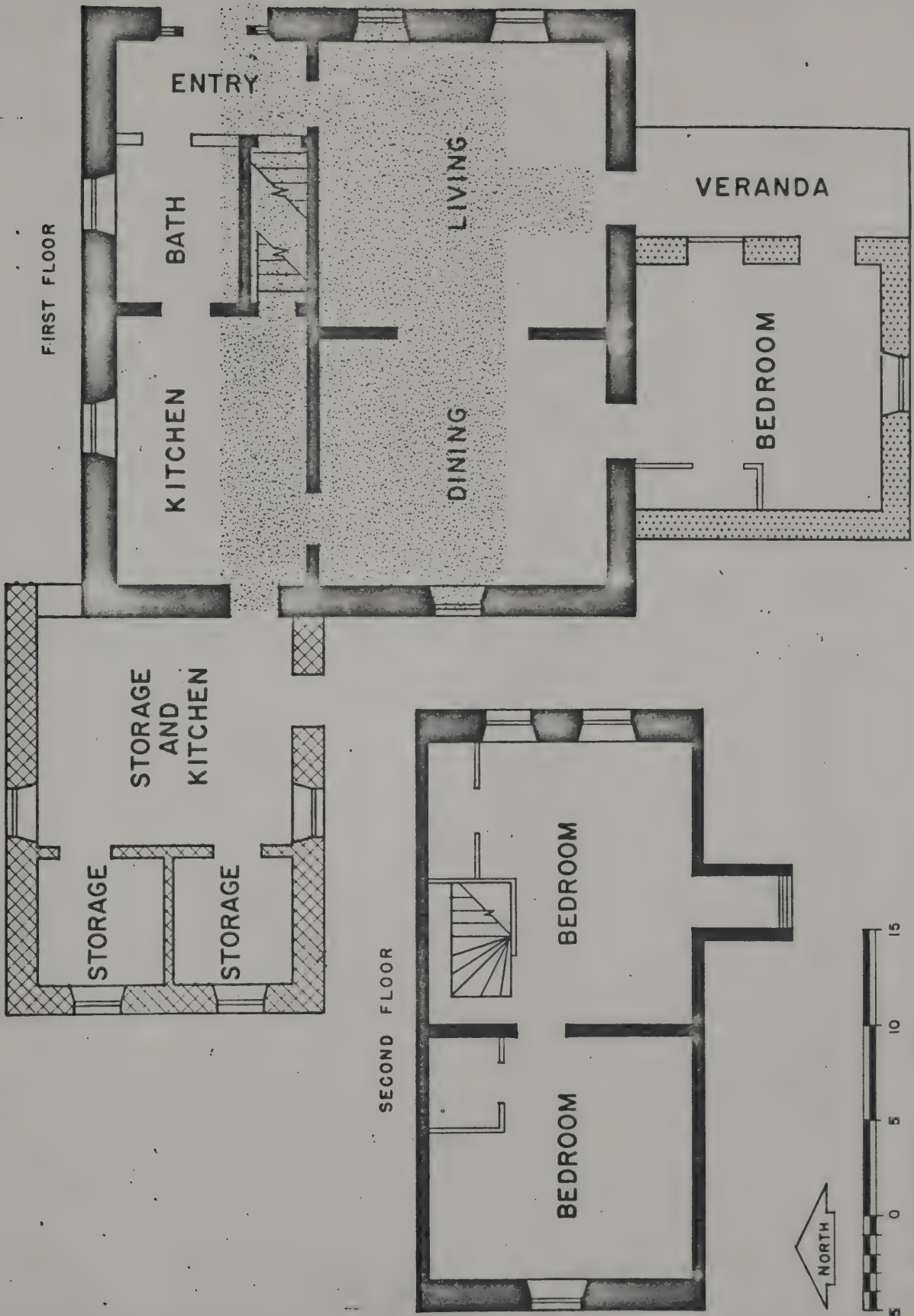






M. R. TIDRICK HOUSE — 1874





M. R. TIDRICK HOUSE — 1944









THE J. G. VAWTER HOUSE

I chose to investigate this house because it was known as one of the outstanding residences in Winterset when it was first constructed. The structure has been altered on at least three occasions, and possibly more. The additions to the Clark and Tidrick residences appear to have remained as originally erected, whereas some of the changes to the Vawter house have been removed and new ones have taken their place. This complicates accurate tracing since the record of the first addition is obscured by the second construction. I would like to emphasize that the plans of the Vawter house are based to a large extent on personal recollection of former occupants which creates a larger margin of error than is found in the other two sets of plans. Very often the exact dimensions of past alterations were not available which necessitated estimation on my part.

While studying past issues of the Winterset Madisonian I uncovered a brief article which not only indicates the business recession previously mentioned, but also gives us insight into the first occupant of this house.

"One of the latest and most extensive changes which has taken place in our city, is the sale by Mr. J. G. Vawter of his entire stock of goods to Mr. W. W. McKnight. Since this sale, Mr. Vawter has been busily engaged in settling up his business affairs.

We have heard the desire expressed on the part of many of our citizens that Mr. Vawter would again go into business in this place, instead of going elsewhere. He is acknowledged to be one of the best business men west of the Mississippi river. He has been engaged in the mercantile business in the city during the past six years, and has done more for the





benefit of the county and for the good of the people in it than any other man, unless it be Judge Pitzer, who is deservedly considered the 'Father of Madison County'. It is hoped that both of these men, J. G. Vawter and John A. Pitzer will again do business in Winterset. The county cannot afford to lose such men."<sup>1</sup>

The exact construction date of the house is not known.

However, the preceding newspaper article would indicate that it was built before 1860. I would like to point out that the list of former owners does not verify this date, in fact it disagrees with the sale of Mr. Vawter's property to Mr. McKnight by five years. It was pointed out by the County Recorder's office that this type of discrepancy is not uncommon. It must be kept in mind that a transfer of title may not be recorded at the Court House for some time. Therefore I would set the construction date as being in the late 1850's.

The original house was quite large in comparison with the other structures. In fact the house today has been divided into two apartments with a third apartment existing over a double garage which was added in recent years.

All additions to the Clark and Tidrick houses have been carried out in stone. In this instance only the original house is stone with all additions being erected in brick or of frame construction.

The original house contained a living room, dining room, kitchen, and a room that was used either as a bedroom or library. The second floor contained three bedrooms, a sewing room, and

<sup>1</sup>Winterset Madisonian. vol. 4, No. 16. February 18, 1860.



a one-half story room which was either used as a bedroom or as storage area. The back portion of this house which contained the kitchen may have been an addition but I was unable to prove this so I assumed that it was part of the original construction. There is the possibility that a side porch may have been present on this house. During the last remodeling a foundation wall was discovered during excavation that may have supported the porch. It is known that a porch did exist across the front of the residence. (fig. 5-A)

The first addition was in brick and was constructed while Mr. McKnight occupied the residence. Only a few portions of this expansion remain therefore the placement of windows and doors can not be verified. (fig. 5-B)

In 1927 the house was again remodeled. Fred Lewis was the contractor that executed the construction of the new portions. At this time the front porch gave way to a smaller entry porch. The north wall of the wash room was moved out and a bath and kitchen were added. The stairs were removed from the previous kitchen and an entry to the basement was provided in the remaining portion of the first addition. (fig. 5-C)

The most recent construction removed the remains of the first addition and replaced it with a breezeway, double garage, and an apartment. All of this work was of conventional frame construction. (fig. 5-D)

Looking again at the original house we find the lintels above the doors and windows are of carved stone which is in





sharp contrast to the plain lintels found on the Clark house. The chimneys on this portion of the house are of cut stone and are octagonal in shape. The chimney at the peak of the south roof ends at the ceiling of the second floor. In the past the house was heated by stoves in the individual rooms. Therefore, a stovepipe was sufficient and the chimney was not carried down through the house. Notice on figure 5-C the window indicated as having a windlass present. Mr. Sankey, the carpenter who completed the last alterations, stated that the windlass was used for raising fuel to the wood box on the second floor. This fuel was then used in the upstairs stoves. It is also interesting to note that no fireplaces are present in this house. This raises the question as to whether a fireplace may have existed between the living room and dining room downstairs and has since been removed or one may have never existed.

Although this residence has undergone a large number of changes in later years it still stands as a landmark to a past era in the City of Winterset.



J. G. VAWTER HOUSE  
LIST OF FORMER OWNERS AND DATES

Original purchase made by Charles Wright (Lot 5 of Block 30)	July 7, 1851
Purchased from Charles Wright by Thomas D. Jones	Apr. 28, 1852
Purchased from Thomas D. Jones by Elizabeth Vawter	Jan. 6, 1860
Purchased from Elizabeth Vawter by W. W. McKnight	Nov. 23, 1865
Heirs of W. W. McKnight to James M. Robbins	Nov. 20, 1908
From Charles Tucker referee to Thomas S. Davies	Nov. 25, 1942
Purchased from Thomas S. Davies by Alma R. White	Sept. 10, 1949
Purchased from Alma R. White by Louise M. Phillips	Feb. 15, 1950
Purchased from Louise M. Phillips by Paul A. and Alma R. White	Feb. 17, 1950
Estate of Paul A. White	Nov. 29, 1956
Purchased from Estate of Paul A. White by Alma R. White	Apr. 26, 1957

The above information is on file in the office of the  
Recorder of Madison County in the city of Winterset, Iowa.



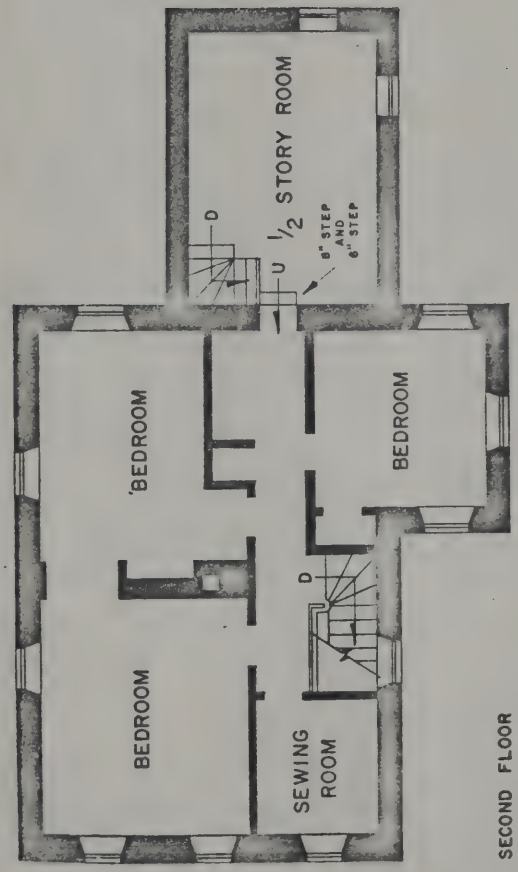


COVERED BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY

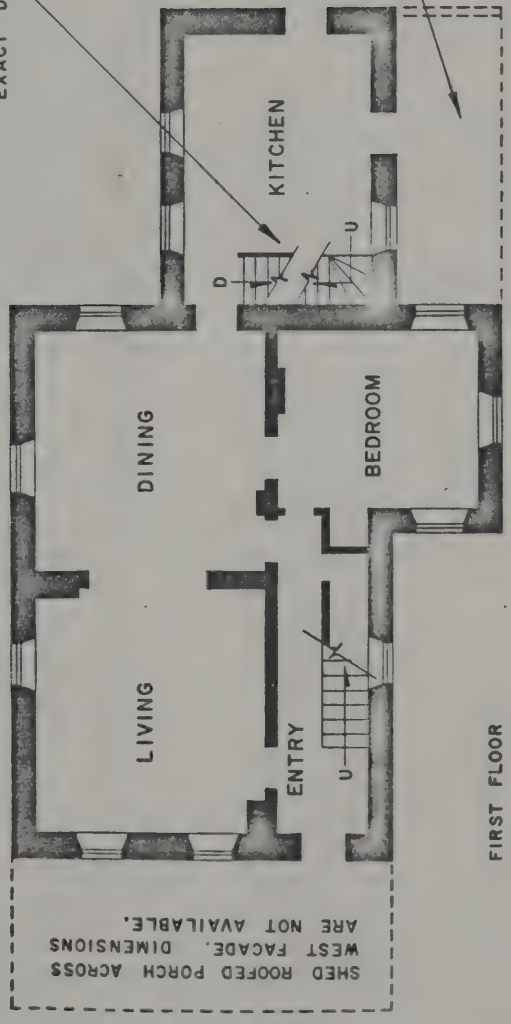
1925983



fig 5-A



PLACEMENT OF STAIRS IS BASED ON DESCRIPTION BY FORMER OCCUPANT. EXACT DIMENSIONS ARE NOT KNOWN



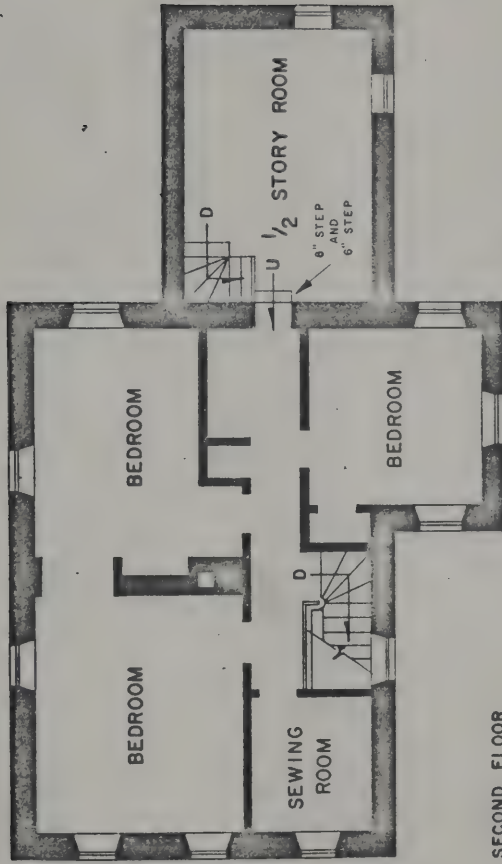
REMAINS OF WALL UNCOVERED DURING CONSTRUCTION OF THIRD ADDITION.

THIS MAY INDICATE THAT A SIDE PORCH EXISTED ON ORIGINAL STRUCTURE.



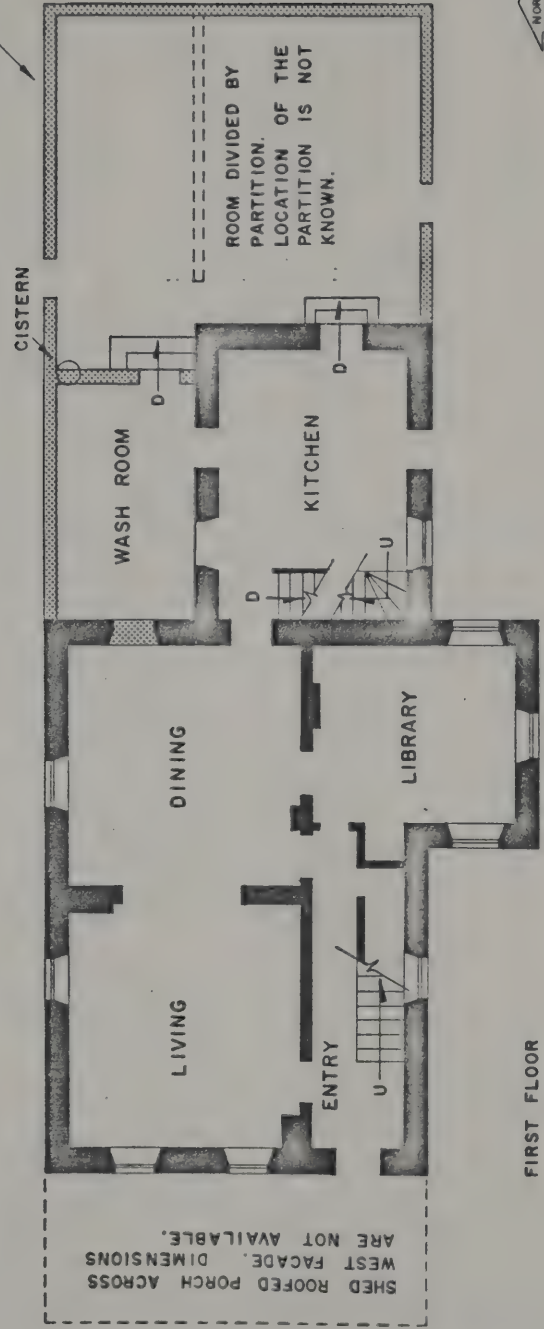






SECOND FLOOR

PLACEMENT OF DOORS AND  
WINDOWS NOT KNOWN FOR  
THIS ADDITION.



FIRST FLOOR

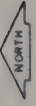




fig 5-C

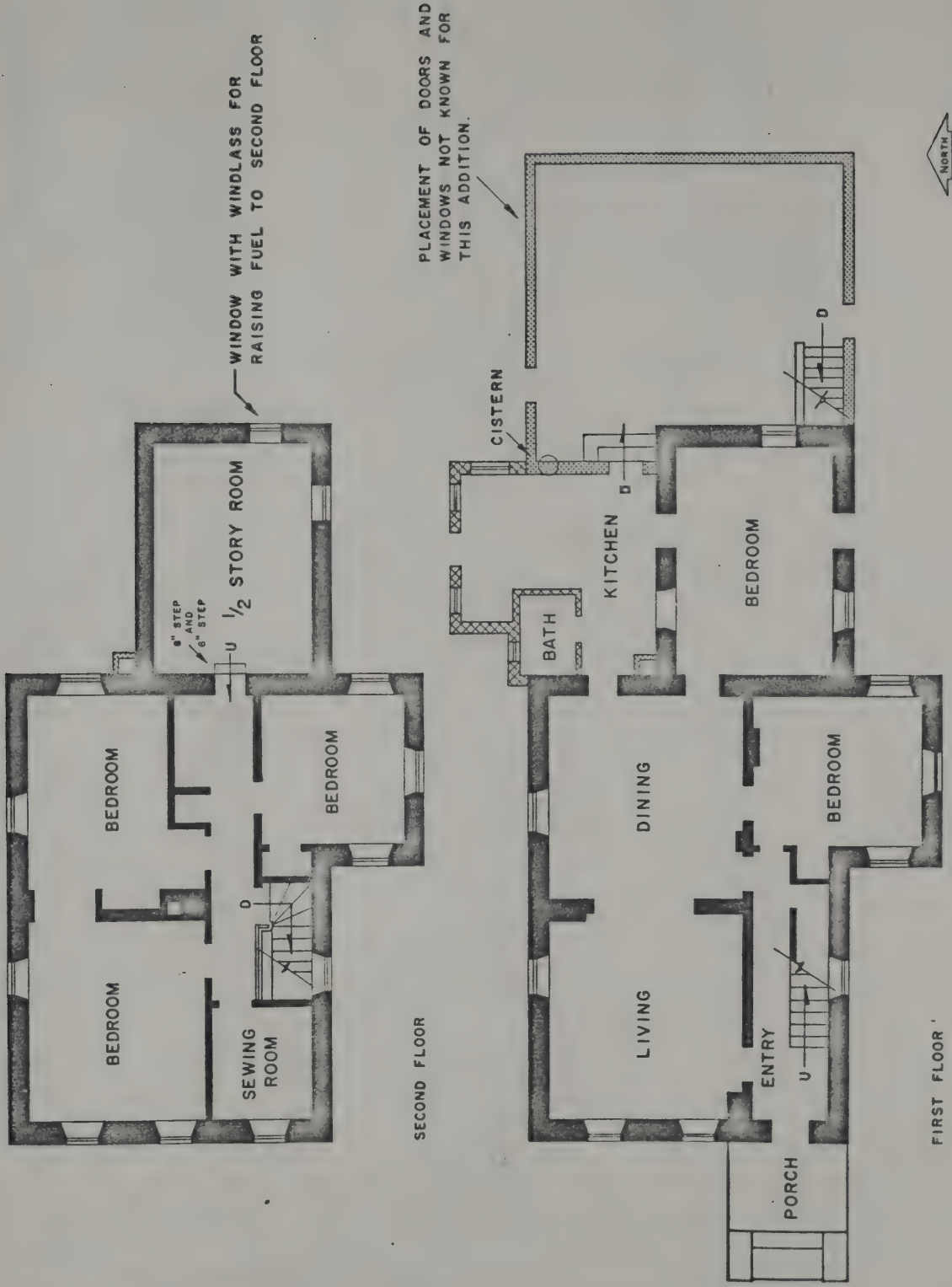
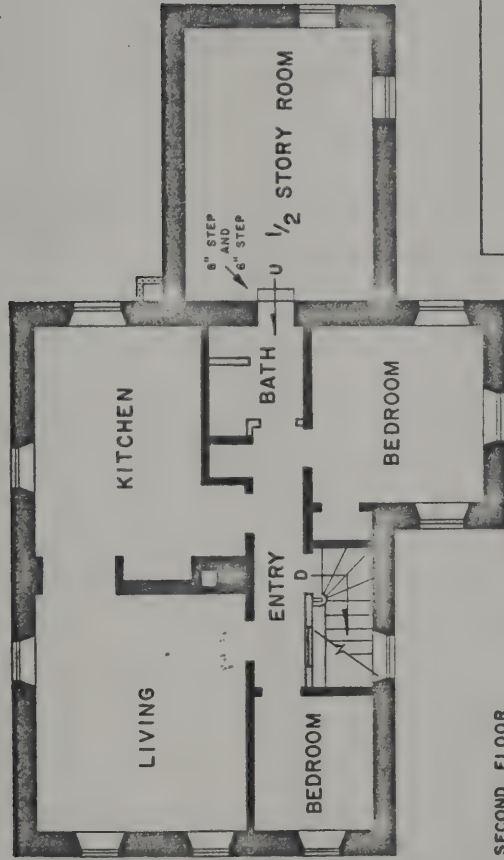
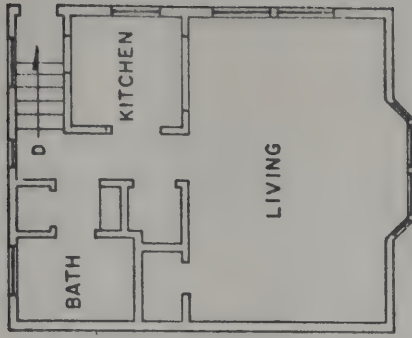






fig 5 D



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR





COVERED BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY.

This report is primarily concerned with historic stone architecture of Winterset, the county seat of Madison County. Besides having an abundance of historic buildings and residences too numerous to investigate, Madison County contains seven covered bridges. It is thought that this is the largest number of covered bridges located in any one county west of the New England region. These bridges provide an excellent tourist attraction for the county and give it a picturesque atmosphere. Because of their antiquity the Board of Supervisors maintains and preserves these bridges in their original state, so that the traveling public may continue to use them for years to come. On the red overlay accompanying figure one I have located the seven existing covered bridges.

The Cedar Lake, or Casper bridge is located three miles northeast of Winterset. This bridge originally spanned Cedar Creek on what is now highway 169. The bridge was built by H. P. Jones and was completed in 1883. In 1920 this bridge was moved to its present location.

The Donahue, or Cutler bridge is four and one-half miles northwest of Bevington and spans North River. This bridge was built by Eli Cox and was completed in 1871. The original pitched roof is still in good repair.

Five miles northwest of Winterset is Hogback bridge which spans North River. This bridge was built by H. P. Jones who also constructed Casper bridge. The structure was finished





in 1884.

The Holliwell bridge spans Middle River on what was a main highway in pioneer days. It is three miles southeast of Winterset. The bridge is the longest of all the covered bridges in Madison County. H. P. Jones and G. K. Foster completed the bridge in 1880.

The Imes bridge was originally built across Middle River near Patterson in 1871. It was moved to its present location in 1887 where it spans Clanton Creek. It is located three and one-half miles southwest of St. Charles.

In 1871 the McBride bridge was completed by J. P. Clark. The bridge spans North Branch ten miles northeast of Winterset.

The Rosman, or Oak Grove bridge is located five miles west of Pammel State Park. This structure spans Middle River and was completed in 1883 by H. P. Jones. It is known as the Haunted bridge.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Leaflet "The Covered Bridge County" prepared and distributed by Chamber of Commerce, Winterset, Iowa.



LIST OF SLIDES  
On file with the Department of Architecture  
Iowa State University

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. J. G. Vawter House  | West facade.   |
| 2. J. G. Vawter House  | Detail of cornice and stone arch above the window.   |
| 3. J. G. Vawter House  | View of front entrance.  |
| 4. J. G. Vawter House  | West face of south wing showing octagonal chimney.   |
| 5. J. G. Vawter House  | Detail of octagonal stone chimney.   |
| 6. J. G. Vawter House  | South facade showing recent addition.  |
| 7. J. G. Vawter House  | Stonework around door and windows of south face of south wing.   |
| 8. J. G. Vawter House  | Detail of lintel over window, upper story of south wing.   |
| 9. J. G. Vawter House  | Overall view of window whose lintel is shown in slide No. 8.   |
| 10. J. G. Vawter House | House from the southwest.  |
| 11. J. G. Vawter House | Small window just below gable of roof on east facade.  |
| 12. J. G. Vawter House | Detail of cornice at gable; also brick chimney which was added at a later date, east end of main portion of the house. |
| 13. J. G. Vawter House | Detail of chimney which has been capped at a later date.   |
| 14. Caleb Clark House  | From southeast looking northwest.  |
| 15. Caleb Clark House  | Detail of lintel over window on south facade of the original house.  |
| 16. Caleb Clark House  | Treatment of window and stonework on south facade of the original house.   |
| 17. Caleb Clark House  | Stone lintel over door on south facade of the original house.  |





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|-------------------------|--|
| 18. Caleb Clark House   | East facade of Smokehouse and Wellhouse addition.  |
| 19. Caleb Clark House   | Detail showing joining of Smokehouse and Wellhouse.  |
| 20. Caleb Clark House   | Window in south end of Smokehouse.   |
| 21. Caleb Clark House   | Smokehouse and Wellhouse additions from the southwest.   |
| 22. Caleb Clark House   | West end of original house showing fireplace.  |
| 23. Caleb Clark House   | South side of barn showing treatment of rafters.   |
| 24. Caleb Clark House   | View of west wall of the barn showing amount of settling.  |
| 25. Caleb Clark House   | Window in west wall of barn, good detail of stone construction.  |
| 26. Hornback House      | View of house from south.  |
| 27. Hornback House      | Cornice detail on south facade.  |
| 28. Hornback House      | Cornice detail at gable, west facade.  |
| 29. Hornback House      | Detail of lintel over double windows.  |
| 30. Hornback House      | Planting box; also shows rustication around windows.   |
| 31. Hornback House      | Detail of octagonal chimney which has been covered over with stucco.   |
| 32. M. R. Tidrick House | View from southeast-original house to the right and 1st addition to the left.  |
| 33. M. R. Tidrick House | Veranda area showing the three doors which opened on to it.  |
| 34. M. R. Tidrick House | Upper window of east facade showing mismatched stonework below window that indicates that it possibly was once a door. |
| 35. M. R. Tidrick House | View of front entrance.  |



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|------------------------------------|--|
| 36. M. R. Tidrick House            | Door in 2nd addition that has been walled in.  |
| 37. M. R. Tidrick House            | West facade; 2nd addition to left 1st to the right.                                      |
| 38. House at 4th and Court Avenues | Northeast corner of house showing stone portion with frame construction connected to it. |
| 39. House at 4th and Court Avenues | Double door on north facade which has been closed except for a small window.             |
| 40. House at 4th and Court Avenues | Detail of closed door showing rustication around the original opening.                   |
| 41. House at 4th and Court Avenues | Lintel over window and rusticated quoins on corner and around window.                    |
| 42. House at 4th and Court Avenues | East facade, front entrance.   |
| 43. Judge Guiberson's House        | East facade, chimneys on both ends are double.   |
| 44. Judge Guiberson's House        | Double chimney on north end of house.  |
| 45. Judge Guiberson's House        | General view from the southeast.   |





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